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STATE FOR SA AND EUR

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SUBJECT: EU CLAIMS NO CHANGE ON NEPAL POLICY

REF: STATE 126758

Classified By: PolOff Sarah Groen for reasons 1.4 (b,d)

11. (C) SUMMARY: PolOff delivered reftel discussion points to interlocutors at the European Commission and Council and the UK Permrep on July 11. All said no "policy statement" on Nepal was being prepared, but the UK Presidency was preparing an informal "internal discussion paper" on Nepal for a July 13 meeting of Council, Commission and Presidency officials on Asia. The discussion paper did not include the language mentioned in demarche cable, and EU contacts said their position on Nepal (i.e. that criticism of the King's takeover does not in any way equate to support for the Maoists) has not changed since the last high-level discussions with Washington. END SUMMARY.

12. (C) On July 11, PolOff spoke with Rensje Teerink (Commission desk officer for Nepal), Antonio Tanca (filling in for the South Asia administrator at the European Council), and James Morrison, (political officer handling Asia at the UK Permrep in Brussels). All said they were unaware of any paper or policy statement being prepared on Nepal. Morrison said he would check with London, and came back with news of the "discussion paper" being prepared for the July 13 meeting. He said he did not have the text of the paper, but thought it was unlikely it would represent any significant departure from the EU's previous position.

13. (C) Officials from the Commission, Council and Presidency convened on July 13 for a meeting of the COASI troika (in the "capitals format," meaning Presidency officials from London and Kathmandu attended). Teerink said the discussion paper was presented, but that it did not contain the draft text cited in the discussion points. She said much of the discussion on Nepal centered on the COASI troika's planned trip to Nepal in early October. Ambassador Bloomfield, the UK envoy to Nepal, seemed surprised by the demarche, as did the London presidency officials, she said.

14. (C) Teerink provided an excerpt from the discussion paper, as follows: "We should make clear to the Government of Nepal that the EU remains supportive of a constitutional monarchy in the context of multi-party democracy and a freely elected civilian government, and make clear to the Maoists that they should not mistake our criticism of the King's takeover and subsequent actions as meaning the EU in any way supports them."

15. (C) COMMENT: The demarche seemed to take Brussels EU and UK Permrep contacts by surprise, with all contacts asking how the U.S. knew about the supposed draft points (which they claim were not included in the discussion paper in any case).

All agreed that the discussion paper and the July 13 troika meeting led to no meaningful change in the EU's position on Nepal. END COMMENT.

MCKINLEY

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